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TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1914.

SHALL IT BE A LIBRARY?

The suggestion made by Wyndham R. Meredith that our memorial to the "Republic" of the regional bank take the form of a public library deserves consideration; the interview in which he makes this proposal will repay a careful study.

We have long thought that the deepest disgrace to the name of Richmond as a progressive city was the absence of a public library. We have good schools, with classes for the backward, for the tubercular, and the rest; we have splendid public parks; we have established playgrounds; we have many fine art galleries and a government which, if not altogether efficient, is at least honest; we have a Health Department second to none in the United States. Yet we drag behind every other large city of the country in that we do not offer our children and young men the books to broaden their horizon and increase their store of knowledge.

This was never more forcibly impressed upon us than in reading, some days ago, the report of the public library of Leavenworth, Kan. Save for the army post and prison of that name, we confess never to have heard of Leavenworth, but we read of an active public library, with branches throughout the town, serving all classes with thousands of interesting books. And as we read, we could but contrast the activity of the Kansas town with our own indifference and wonder if we might not understand Kansas through the report of that library.

Viewed merely in its relation to popular education, the lack of a library tremendously reduces the good results of our public school system. As Mr. Meredith points out in the article we print this morning, our children on the average do not remain in school more than four years. The exceptional boy or girl finishes the public schools, a few go to college; the vast majority go to work. Unless, after hours, they attend the night schools or the Mechanics Institute, these children have no means of increasing their intellectual assets. To put the case bluntly, we educate our children until they are old enough to learn—and then do not permit them to learn. If any civic policy could be more shortsighted, we do not know what it is.

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POLITICAL PROGRESS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

The meeting of Progressive Democrats to be held in Raleigh, N. C., to-morrow is of more than passing interest to Virginians, because of the nature of the subjects to be considered, the "platform" which will be discussed containing a number of planks similar to the progressive legislation considered at the recent session of the Virginia General Assembly. Some of the reforms urged have long obtained in Virginia; some were advanced by statute by the last Legislature, and for some Virginia is still waiting. It will be interesting to observe how North Carolina deals with the questions involved.

Leading them all is a declaration for a "legalized state-wide primary," covering all elective offices and all parties, with a powerful corrupt practices act. The dominant sentiment in Virginia favors just such a law, and although the Virginia General Assembly did not see fit to make primary elections compulsory upon all parties and failed to strengthen sufficiently the penalties against corruption, it took a long step forward. North Carolina Democrats of progressive tendencies hope to arouse public sentiment to such a height that the next Legislature of that State will be compelled to bow to the will of the people and enact a real, live legalized primary law.

Other planks in their platform, which remind us of conditions in Virginia, are the revision of the tax system; the restriction of local legislation and control of labor. The Virginia Legislature has already paved the way for a reform of our present tax laws, a special session being called for that purpose. The Land bill to rid the General Assembly of the onerous burden of special, private and local legislation, by placing more power in local matters in the hands of the county supervisors, was lost. We have made progress in dealing with our convicts. North Carolina now tackles the same problems.

A number of other reforms will be urged by the Democrats attending the meeting, which will be addressed by various State leaders of Democracy and by such national leaders as Secretary of State Bryan and Secretary of the Navy Daniels. Strange to note, there is no mention in the call of the initiative, referendum or of the recall. However, the program laid out by those who have called the meeting is ambitious enough. If the meeting has the effect of inducing the Legislature of 1915 to enact a good primary election law, to revise the tax system and to give the State an improved child labor law it will make history in North Carolina. Virginians who hope to see the South keep pace politically with its industrial progress wish North Carolina success in its efforts to catch up with Virginia, where she has and pass her where she keeps step. Her progress will inspire us, and when our General Assembly meets in 1916 we will overtake her, and the two States can then go forward together.

JUDGE AND PROSECUTOR.

Some Chicago Judge has been re-elected in the performance of his duty. The following paragraph taken from the account of a murder trial in that city, will suggest in what way:

The prosecutor, in his final argument, engaged in frenzied oratory. He pointed, shrieked, he had raised aloft the hammer with which the crime had been committed. He hounded on the floor with his feet. He ran his fingers through his hair when it fell over his eyes with his features.

The duty of a judge is to see that the trial of cases shall be in accordance with law and that all parties shall receive justice. Yet this judge sits calmly on the bench and suffers to be so unrestrained and even unbridled an attempt on the part of the public prosecutor to secure the conviction and death of a citizen, not under the rule of law, but under the rule of prejudice, passion and excitement. This prosecutor "was trying to get the jurors excited and not informed," the Ohio State Journal accurately expresses it. "It was unfair; it was unjust." It was more; it was the violation of the spirit of the law which guarantees a fair trial to every man, and the judge on the bench should have put an end to the prosecutor's foolish and excited harangue. That he did not is to his discredit.

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HOW TO GET AN EASTER BONNET.

We do not recommend this method. On the contrary, we do not believe it will be necessary in the case of any of the Times-Dispatch family. None of our feminine readers has a husband so mean; none of the men who read this paper would think of denying his wife a hat or of purchasing her one at as low a figure as \$5. But here are the facts as reported by the Kansas City correspondent of the New York Sun.

A year and more ago, it appears, a young townsman married himself a wife. He fed her abundantly, he gave her a good home and he behaved himself very decently. But he would not buy her any clothes. "I had a hat when I was married," states the young wife, "but I wore it until it was shabby. I asked my husband for a new one, but never got it, so I have been wearing a scarf on my head when I go out."

She stood this until the approach of Easter, and then, like the rest of womankind, she thought herself of those marvelous fads the models and the early birds are wearing; she saw them in the shop windows, she read of them in the newspapers, she determined to have one or die. But as her husband would not yield an inch, she hid herself to the court, had her husband summoned to appear and poured the tale of her woes into the ear of the judge. That wise man was quick in deciding the case. "The Lord never made a woman that could be happy without a hat," he said, and turned to the young man. "You, as her husband, are sworn to make her happy. Give her \$5 to buy a bonnet to-morrow night and give her \$1 for her own use every pay night, or you will have to serve every day of a \$300 fine I am now giving you."

The young wife smiled radiantly; the husband took his medicine; the bailiff called the next case. She will get her hat, we trust, and will wear it in all its glory. And the moral—but why point to a moral when Justice Crutchfield sits every day except Sunday, and a warrant only costs 50 cents?

A RIVAL THAT HELPS.

New York musical reviews report that the Century Opera Company will start its season on April 19 instead of May 15, as previously announced. But the change in date is due not to declining, but to overflowing houses; time must be had for modifications in the interior of the opera house that will accommodate the crowds seeking admission.

The Century Company began its season last autumn, while the musical croakers of New York were practicing a dirge. It could not be, they declared, Hammerstein had failed in competition with the Metropolitan, no other impresario had a chance. The people would not support a second company of the first-class; any opera below the standard of the Metropolitan would not draw a house large enough to keep itself above water.

The Aborn brothers, who were backing the new venture, merely smiled and went to work. Their season has been more than a success; good crowds have listened to good music creditably sung, and young artists have been given an introduction which would not have been possible but for the establishment of the "rival" company.

And all this success, it seems, is due to the fact that the Aborns have not attempted to compete with the Metropolitan, but have catered to that large and intelligent class which loves good opera, but cannot afford to pay the prices demanded by the aristocratic company on Broadway. The Century, in a word, has done educational work—has done it so creditably and so earnestly that thousands who would never foot even in the top-most gallery of the Metropolitan have learned the great French and Italian operas, and have been trained to appreciate the best in modern music.

Unless we much mistake, the Metropolitan will find itself more prosperous by reason of the existence of a more homelike, less expensive opera house in New York; the Century itself will improve in its finances and in the quality of the opera it offers, while New York music lovers and the thousands who visit the city every year will be the great beneficiaries.

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